

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, favorable reconsideration of the outstanding office action is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4, and 11-17 remain in this application. Claim 1 has been amended herein. Claims 3 and 5-10 have been cancelled previously.

1. Drawings

Applicants note the Examiner did not indicate in the accompanying form PTO-L-326 that the formal drawings previously submitted have been approved. Applicants are not aware of grounds for objection to the drawings, and without specific rejection from the Examiner, Applicants will treat the drawings as if they have been approved.

2. Art Rejections

Schutte and Kawai References

Claims 1, 2, 16 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Patent No. WO 02/18042 ("Schutte"). Claims 4 and 11-13 are rejected over Schutte in view of Kawai (US 5,447,624).

As supported in the present application at least by the text of paragraph [0025] and by the associated drawing(s), claim 1 has been amended herein to recite, in part, that "the apparatus further comprises a heat conductive medium supporting the microreactor within the pressure vessel and arranged and positioned so as to be capable of providing thermal exchange between the microreactor and the pressure vessel." Schutte does not teach or suggest the quoted feature(s), particularly in combination together with the rest of the features recited in claim 1. Kawai adds nothing in this regard.

In particular, Schutte does not teach or suggest a heat conductive medium supporting the microreactor, as taught and shown in the present application. For example, the distributing medium 38 of Fig. 10 of Schutte is comprised of "heat-conducting particles . . . which rest on a sieve plate [at the top of the "microreactor"] which is not shown." Thus the conducting particles of Schutte are supported by the

“microreactor”, not the other way around. Kawai does not teach the use of a microreactor, and so teaches nothing about the support of a microreactor within a pressure vessel. Accordingly, claims 1, 2, 16 and 17 are believed allowable over Schutte and the other art of record, and claims 4 and 11-13 are believed allowable over Schutte in view of Kawai.

Suzuki and Swift References

Claims 1, 2, and 14-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Patent No. WO 02/18042 (“Schutte”). Claims 4 and 11-13 are rejected over Schutte in view of Kawai (US 5,447,624).

As supported in the present application at least by the text of paragraph [0025] and by the associated drawing(s), claim 1 has been amended herein to recite, in part, that “the apparatus further comprises a heat conductive medium supporting the microreactor within the pressure vessel and arranged and positioned so as to be capable of providing thermal exchange between the microreactor and the pressure vessel.” Suzuki does not teach or suggest the quoted feature(s), particularly in combination together with the rest of the features recited in claim 1. Swift adds nothing in this regard.

In particular, neither Suzuki nor Swift teaches or suggests a heat conductive medium supporting the microreactor within the pressure vessel, as taught and shown in the present application. For argument’s sake it may be assumed, as stated by the Examiner in the current Action, that “the medium E [of Suzuki] inherently acts as support for the walls of the reactor.” However, the claim recites that the “microreactor” is supported “within the pressure vessel” by the recited medium, not that the walls of the microreactor are supported by said medium.

Supporting the microreactor walls against an internal pressure is not the same as supporting the microreactor itself. The plain meaning of supporting the microreactor within the pressure vessel is bearing the weight of the microreactor or maintaining its position within and relative to the pressure vessel. Suzuki thus does not teach a heat conductive medium supporting the microreactor as recited in the claim. Swift adds

nothing on this point. Accordingly, claims 1, 2, and 14-17 are believed allowable over Suzuki in view of Swift.

3. Conclusion


Based upon the above amendments, remarks, and papers of records, applicant believes the pending claims of the above-captioned application are in allowable form and patentable over the prior art of record. Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Applicant believes that a three-month extension is necessary to make this Reply timely, a separate request for which is submitted together herewith. Should applicant be in error, applicant respectfully requests that the Office grant such time extension pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) as necessary to make this Reply timely, and hereby authorizes the Office to charge any necessary fee or surcharge with respect to said time extension to the deposit account of the undersigned firm of attorneys, Deposit Account 03-3325.

Please direct any questions or comments to Gregory V. Bean at (607) 974-2698.

Respectfully submitted,

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